

The CBS Inquiry and Report into the Shooting of President John F. Kennedy

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The sun hardly shines on a day that doesn't have assassination, clandestinism, or cover-ups in the news. The A.I.B. cannot hope to comment on each and every report. However, there was a recent media event (November, 1975) of such scope and political significance as to warrant a reply. This event was the Columbia Broadcasting System four-part inquiry into the shootings of John F. Kennedy, Robert F. Kennedy, Martin Luther King, and George Wallace. These special broadcasts were offered as a response to this country's clamor for the truth. In reality, they proved to be officialdom's retreat to a second line of defense.

Parts I and II examined the assassination of John Kennedy. The first show reviewed the assassination itself; the second, the background of Lee Harvey Oswald.

Part I still concluded that Oswald was the lone assassin. To reach this conclusion, CBS was guilty of brazen omissions, unprincipled use of "experts" and their testimony, and deft mixing of truths, half-truths, and untruths.

Here are some of our observations.

Two out of Eleven Expert Riflemen

Eleven expert riflemen were used, under controlled optimum conditions and after intensive practice, to verify the Warren Commission's three-shot theory. Only two were able to duplicate the shooting within the extreme parameters of the Commission's scenario. So, CBS concluded the lone assassin theory was tenable, and therefore true.

This conclusion is truly absurd. Oswald did not fire under ideal conditions, did not practice, and was by no stretch of the imagination as talented with a rifle as CBS's experts. The fact that only two of the eleven professionals were able to fire three accurate rounds within 5.6 seconds is even one more indication that Oswald could NOT have performed the shooting as hypothesized by the Warren Commission. In addition, the relevancy of this test is of course questionable due to the very strong evidence that more than three shots were fired and that one gunman was involved.

The Identity of a "Lone Assassin"?

CBS's next step was to further prove that it was Oswald indeed who was the lone assassin. They offer as evidence simply a dubious and vague motion in the sixth floor window of the Texas School Book Depository as recorded on film by spectator Robert Hughes. Sobriety and common sense dictate that this proves nothing. To CBS, it seems to be a quantum leap into

Oswald's guilt. But CBS did not offer one iota of real evidence against Oswald, and they ignored the testimony of such witnesses as Mrs. Arnold and Officer Baker that suggests Oswald was not even on the sixth floor during the shooting. Needless to say, CBS's case against Oswald would hardly influence a court of law.

The Magic Bullet, Commission Exhibit 399

CBS's attempts to demonstrate the tenability of the single bullet theory (a single bullet that wounded President Kennedy and Governor Connally) were deliberately misleading. There is truly overwhelming medical, eyewitness, and photographic evidence that explicitly shows that Kennedy and Connally were struck by different bullets. Yet CBS concluded otherwise. The reasons they offer are a slight and questionable movement of the Governor's hand after Kennedy was struck. If this is the best they can do to buttress the cornerstone of the Commission's findings, then here is further proof of the implausibility of this theory.

The Motion of Kennedy's Head at the Final Shot

Their attempt to defend the lone assassin theory against the violent backward motion of Kennedy's head upon the impact of the last shot is highly implausible. Their ONLY explanation for this graphic movement is that Jacqueline Kennedy could have pulled him backwards. This premise attributes to the President's wife super-human strength and reflexes. It is not demonstrable scientifically with any of the photographs. It is a totally fictitious explanation. It is indicative of CBS's desperate attempts to legitimize the Warren Commission's conclusions. Their expert's verbal claim that Kennedy's brain matter and bone were thrown forward is in direct contradiction to the abundance of eyewitness and medical evidence on the official record which states that over 98% of such material was blasted BACKWARDS.

Dr. James Weston

To reach these flawed conclusions, CBS was forced to make heavy-handed and unprincipled use of its "expert".

The use of Dr. James Weston, president-elect of the American Academy of Forensic Science, to support Warren Commission findings may be impressive to the layperson, but it is extremely unethical in light of the fact that the current president and his three predecessors have all expressed grave reservations publicly about the lone assassin theory. If CBS was concerned with an honest presentation of the facts, they would have made note of this on their show.

Itek Corp., A CIA Contractor

Perhaps even more offensive was the use of the Itek Corp. to support major conclusions. Itek's credibility as an impartial authority would suffer considerably had the American people been informed that one of Itek's major clients is the CIA. Both the president and vice-president of Itek have admitted to being former CIA agents — facts certainly known to CBS.

CBS implies that because these people are experts, we should accept their undocumented conclusions blindly. In other words, Americans should trust the experts, not the evidence, not their eyes looking at photographs, not their common sense. We were asked to accept the Warren Commission Report in the same way as in 1964.

The Second Show

The second show, while cautious and flawed, drew a bottom-line conclusion that was more in accord with the historical realities it examined. For CBS acknowledged that the CIA and FBI had not been candid with the Warren Commission in their disclosure of Oswald's activities.

The A.I.B. criticizes this show because it failed to examine the issue of Jack Ruby's shooting of Oswald and failed to adequately explore the many intriguing questions and implications that this raises.

Among the comments that may be made are the following.

- CBS noted that Oswald learned Russian but accepted the view that Oswald was self-taught and ignored Warren Commission evidence that indicated Oswald had been instructed in Russian by the Marine Corps.
- CBS ignored the overwhelming evidence that Oswald could not have financed or arranged (i.e. including air travel London to Helsinki on October 10, 1959) his 1959 voyage to Russia, which culminated in his defection.
- CBS interviewed U.S. Consul Richard Snyder, who had served at the Embassy in Moscow. But they failed to take note of the testimony of John McVickar (a U.S. embassy official) whose impression was that Oswald "was following a pattern of behavior in which he has been tutored by a person or persons unknown ... that he has been in contact with others before or during his Marine Corps tour who had guided him and encouraged him in his actions" (see Commission Exhibit 941, 18th volume of the hearings, page 155).
- The CIA, for the first time, through Director Colby, admitted to CBS that the CIA had intercepted Oswald's mail to and from Russia. Recent official investigations have revealed that the CIA routinely photographed mail between the U.S. and the U.S.S.R. and opened and read many letters. Yet when asked by the Warren Commission the CIA failed to produce any of Oswald's correspondence. So what did CBS do? It let Colby off the hook.
- CBS presented important information concerning a September, 1963 conversation between J. A. Milteer (a right-wing extremist) and an informant of the Miami police intelligence unit. In this talk, Milteer spoke of a plot to kill

Kennedy in a southern city with a high-powered rifle from a high vantage point. CBS reported that the information was taken seriously by Florida officials who then passed on the information to the Secret Service and the FBI. But CBS failed to add an essential part of Milteer's story, which was that a "patsy" would be picked up after the killing — just to throw the public off the track.

- CBS was able to pinpoint many indications that Oswald's New Orleans political activities were evidence of his role as an informant and provocateur, most likely for the FBI. CBS presented important statements from admitted FBI informant Oreste Pena that he had seen his contact, FBI special agent Warren DeBrueys, on many occasions in a New Orleans Greek restaurant conversing with Lee Harvey Oswald. □

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limited conspiracy, but by the breakdown of the protective system that should have made an assassination impossible. Once insiders knew that he would not be protected, it was easy to pick the day and the place. In fact, those responsible for luring Kennedy to Dallas on November 22, 1963 were not even in on the plan itself. He went to Texas innocuously enough: to dedicate an Air Force hospital facility at Brooks Air Force Base in San Antonio. It was not too difficult then to get him to stop at Fort Worth — "to mend political fences." Of course, no good politician would go to Fort Worth and skip Dallas. All the conspirators had to do was to let the right "mechanics" know where Kennedy would be and when and, most importantly, that the usual precautions would not have been made and that escape would be facilitated. This is the greatest single clue to that assassination. Who had the power to call off or drastically reduce the usual security precautions that always are in effect whenever a president travels? Castro did not kill Kennedy, nor did the CIA. The power source that arranged that murder was on the inside. It had the means to reduce normal security and permit the choice of a hazardous route. It also has had the continuing power to cover up that crime for twelve years. □

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The Candidate's Background

Citizen pressures and media skills should combine to produce the kind of campaign that will reveal the candidate's values, character, leadership, and ability to build a team. As a matter of course every news medium should do at least one thorough background story on each candidate — showing the candidate's past political performance, examining the manner in which he or she handled crises in the past, reporting objectively on controversial incidents. The emphasis should be on events that enable citizens to make their own judgments of the candidate's political philosophy and mode of handling complex issues, and on the candidate's temperament, depth, sensitivity, character, candor and probity.

A piece of nation's future is decided on election night. In the months preceding that night, the citizens have serious business with the candidates, and searching questions to ask about them:

- What kind of leadership will a candidate give us?
- Will he play to our fears and hatred, or will he demand the best that is in us?
- Will he have the courage to stretch us? □